

June/July 2016

GARNER

UPDATE

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IN THIS EDITION

CONNECT

& plug in the future

Connect conference slated for Aug. 4. See page 3.



Public Works director receives honor. See page 4.

TOWN HALL CALENDAR

July 26: Town Council work session (6 p.m.)

Aug. 1: Town Council regular meeting (7 p.m.)

Aug. 16: Town Council regular meeting (7 p.m.)

Town Council, Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment meetings are held in the training room in the new police station at 912 7th Ave. while the new Town Hall is under construction. The Town Council's regular meetings are recorded and broadcast (not live) on GTV11 (Time Warner 11, AT&T U-verse 99). They can also be watched on demand at garnernc.gov.



/townofgarner



Town officials and invited dignitaries do the ceremonial turning of dirt at the groundbreaking for the new Town Hall at 900 7th Ave. on July 14.

Officials, Dignitaries Break Ground on New Town Hall

Town officials and invited dignitaries broke ground on Garner's new Town Hall in a ceremony on July 14.

The two-story, 26,000-square-foot Town Hall at 900 7th Ave. will house the Administration, Economic Development, Engineering, Finance, Human Resources, Inspections and Planning Departments as well as the Town Council Chambers. It is expected to be completed in the summer of 2017. The budget for the project is \$7.5 million.

The new Town Hall is being constructed on the site of the old municipal building, eliminating the need to purchase land for the project.

The Town Hall project and the new police station at 912 7th Ave. are possible because 75 percent of voters supported Public Safety and Services Facilities Bonds in March 2013. Large majorities supported the other bonds in that 2013 vote as well.

"We thank our citizens for approving the funds to build a new Town Hall," Mayor Ronnie Williams said. "When our voters overwhelmingly passed our bond referendums, it was a sign that they had trust in us. The bond vote reinforced the idea that government should be of the people, by the people and for the people."

The Town will build—or has

Please see next page



To get the latest news from the Town, follow us on Twitter (@TownofGarner).



A Message from the Mayor

The groundbreaking for the new Town Hall was a significant milestone in Garner's history. Next year around this time, we hope to be



having a ribbon cutting for that new municipal services building.

The Town Hall project, the new police station, the planned recreation center downtown and the numerous other bond projects are an indication that Garner is moving in the

right direction.

All the private-sector development in the past couple of years is, of course, even more powerful evidence that Garner is moving forward. I encourage you to register for the CONNECT conference (see next page) to learn more about economic growth and development in Garner. This year's conference, on Aug. 4 at the Grand Marquise Ballroom, will once again be full of great information and insights about where Garner is headed.

I also urge you to visit the new [Garner Forward website](http://GarnerForward.com) (distinct from the Town's newly redesigned garnernc.gov; see details about that on the next page) to learn more about how you can get involved in helping to plan Garner's future. For starters, you can complete the quick survey on that site.

Things are moving fast in Garner, and we all need to work together to keep them moving forward.

Ronnie S. Williams

Ronnie S. Williams

Groundbreaking — Council Passes Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-17

Continued from page one

built—a number of other projects as a result of the bond program, including a recreation center on the corner of Main and Montague streets in historic downtown Garner, dog parks in North and South Garner, dugout covers and new concessions buildings at ballfields in South Garner and Garner Recreational parks, and sidewalks in various parts of town.

ADW Architects of Charlotte was selected to design the new Town Hall, and the Resolute Building Company of Chapel Hill was chosen as the general contractor for the project.

Until they are able to move into the new Town Hall, Town staff are dispersed at different locations. Planning and Inspections are at the old police annex building at 400 Aversboro Road. Administration, Economic Development, Engineering, Finance and Human Resources are at 914 7th Ave. in a building that the Town was able to purchase several years ago at well below market value.

The new fiscal year started July 1 for the Town. A \$30.7 million operating budget for fiscal year 2016-17 was approved unanimously by the Town Council in a resolution on June 21. The budget includes a one-and-a-half-cent property tax rate increase for public safety. With that increase, Garner's new property tax rate stands at 53.25 cents per \$100 of valuation.

The tax rate is based on an estimated total assessed valuation of just over \$3.25 billion. It assumes an estimated collection rate of 98.34 percent.

Public safety (police and fire protection) accounts for over \$10.7 million, the largest single portion of expenditures in this fiscal year's budget. Public works is next at over \$7.2 mil-

lion. Just under \$3.6 million is dedicated to debt service.

Employee health-care costs, which are set to jump by over 30 percent this fiscal year, posed a major challenge for the Town's budget team.

Staff is projecting unassigned fund balance (reserves) to be approximately \$16.5 million at the end of fiscal year 2015-16. Of this, just under \$6.5 million remains committed to offset the debt associated with the bond program. This leaves approximately \$10 million in unassigned fund balance.

The budget resolution, the recommended budget and adjustments to the recommended budget are at garnernc.gov under Finance.



For updates on the Town Hall and other bond projects, visit garnerbonds.com.



Help Us Move Garner Forward

The Town of Garner's Planning Department is kicking off its update of Garner's Comprehensive Growth and Transportation plans, and it needs citizen input to make the project a success. The combined project will update both the 2010 Transportation Plan and create a Comprehensive Plan "blueprint" for how to move forward in the areas of land development, utility services and other areas where the public and private sectors intersect.

A new website, garnerforward.com, has been launched to provide information about the plan updates. The site also has a quick survey that citizens are urged to take.

Website Gets a Redesign

The Town launched a new website last month. It was a big endeavor and involved lots of work by staff and an award-winning company that specializes in building and hosting local government websites.

The site can still be found at garnernc.gov; that won't change. What has changed is the look and layout of the homepage and the interior pages. The new homepage creates a nice first impression and serves as a strong marketing and branding tool for Garner.

The new homepage has a cleaner design and is more focused on putting services out front. The colorful swoosh buttons on the homepage enable users to go right to Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources and its programming software; to signups to receive news and information directly from the Town; and to an online tool (garner info) for enabling citizens to



GarnerNC.gov's homepage got a big makeover recently.

submit service requests. One of the swoosh buttons is for Development Services. That's the umbrella category for Planning, Inspections, Engineering and Economic Development (including downtown revitalization).

The new homepage also allows the Town to do a better job of highlighting the information, events and initiatives that are of the most interest to users and of the most importance to the Town and its future.

Chamber Conference to Shine Light on Garner Growth

Join local and regional business leaders, Chamber members, elected officials and economic development professionals for discussion, news and predictions about Garner's economic prospects at the 2016 CONNECT conference Thursday, Aug. 4 at the Grand Marquis Ballroom (205 New Fidelity Court). The conference runs noon to 6:30 p.m. and is presented by the Garner Chamber of Commerce with support from the Town of Garner.

A bonus bus tour starting at 10:15 a.m. will include stops at a new corporate headquarters in Garner and a tour of the Pergo manufacturing facility. Here are the sessions, which start at 1 p.m.:

CONNECT & plug in the future

Transit's Potential Impact on Garner Development

Commuter rail and bus rapid transit are back in for Garner. How can that impact Garner development?

Plug in the Future That's Right for Garner

How will Garner grow? Participate in an interactive experience to collect input for a plan that will move Garner forward.

What's Next at White Oak?

So many grand openings and ribbon cuttings at White Oak, and the construction continues. What's next? Hear from White Oak developer Rich Barta with Core Properties.

Entrepreneurship in Garner

The spotlight will be on emerging Garner entrepreneurs (one was named the region's No. 1 startup company to watch). Learn why they chose Garner to launch their startup companies.

To learn more or to register for the conference, call the Chamber of Commerce at (919) 772-6440, email info@garnerchamber.com or visit garnerchamber.com. The registration deadline is Aug. 1.



You can follow the Garner Chamber of Commerce on Twitter (@GarnerChamber).



Griffis Named Top Public Works Employee

Kenneth Griffis has been selected by his fellow employees as the Garner Public Works Department's Employee of the Year for 2015.

Griffis began working in Public Works as a seasonal maintenance worker in September 1989 and was hired to a full-time position in the Streets Division in November 1991. He was promoted to equipment operator I in 1994 and lead equipment operator in 1997.



A reserved parking spot at the Public Works complex is just one of the perks of being named the department's employee of the year.

Transportation Research and Education at N.C. State University. Classes included subjects such as supervision, work zones, construction inspection, asphalt maintenance, safety, defensive driving, drainage and vegetation maintenance. Griffis is certified as a work zone flagger instructor, forklift operator, commercial driver and excavation competent person.

During his career, Griffis has been involved in performing every duty in the Streets Division. On a typical day, he can be found leading a crew of himself and three others performing various tasks relating to pavement, sidewalks, vegetation, drainage and roadside maintenance. His crews are also involved in right-of-way clean-ups, special event setups and snow removal as well as numerous other duties assigned to the Streets Division.

Griffis has become proficient in the operation of every piece of equipment assigned to his unit. This includes backhoe-loaders, dump trucks, bucket trucks, front-end loaders, motor graders, asphalt rollers and all of the associated small equipment.

Along with a plaque recognizing him as Employee of the Year, Griffis received an invitation for lunch with Town Manager Rodney Dickerson, a free fishing pass or shelter rental and a personal parking spot at the Public Works complex.

Cox Presented with Leadership Service Award

The American Public Works Association (APWA) recently presented Town of Garner Public Works Director Paul Cox with the Robert S. Hopson Leadership Service Award during the 59th Annual American Public Works Association, North Carolina Chapter Conference and Exposition in Concord.

The Robert S. Hopson Award is presented annually by the chapter to recognize an individual for outstanding service and meritorious achievement in local government. Cox's nomination package spoke highly of his work ethic, character and commitment to personal and professional growth.

"I congratulate Paul on this tremendous honor and recognition by his peers," Town Manager Rodney Dickerson said. "Paul is an integral part of what makes Garner a great place to be."

Under Cox's leadership, Garner's Public Works Department in 2014 became the first APWA-accredited public works agency in North Carolina—and one of only 108 agencies nationwide.

"Paul and his team of dedicated public works professionals place personal attention to residents as the highest priority and are often praised

at Town Council meetings for their public service," the APWA said.

Cox has served the APWA North Carolina Chapter in several leadership capacities including president of the Streets Division in 2010. He has served as a director on the APWA-NC Executive Board and has chaired the Presidential Award for Chapter Excellence (PACE) Committee since 2013. He is currently active on the chapter's 60th Anniversary Committee.

Cox has been with the Garner Public Works Department for more than 23 years.



Did you know that the Town of Garner is now on Instagram?